



Patient & Family Guide  
2021

# Exercises After Your Ankle Injury

Aussi disponible en français :  
*Exercices après une blessure à la cheville*  
(FF85-2198)



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# Exercises After Your Ankle Injury

**Your foot and ankle may be swollen.**

## **Swelling**

Swelling is normal. You may notice changes in the amount of swelling throughout the day.

**To decrease swelling:**

- **Elevate (raise) your leg when resting. Raise your foot above the level of your heart.**
- **Move your foot up and down until you feel a mild to moderate stretch.**
- **If you have been given a compression stocking:**
  - › Wear it through the day
  - › Take it off at night and to do your exercises
- **Elevate your leg at night with pillows under your leg or mattress.**
- **Use ice (see ‘Heat and ice’ section on page 2).**

## **Stiffness**

- **Ankle and foot stiffness is common.**
- **Start moving your ankle to restore joint motion.**
- **You may have discomfort when you first start the exercises. This will get better over time as your ankle becomes more flexible.**

## Walking

- Your doctor or physiotherapist will tell you how much weight you are allowed to put on your foot/ankle, and the type of walking aide (like cane, crutches) you may need.
- Walk more as pain and endurance allows. Let pain and swelling be your guide.

## Heat and ice

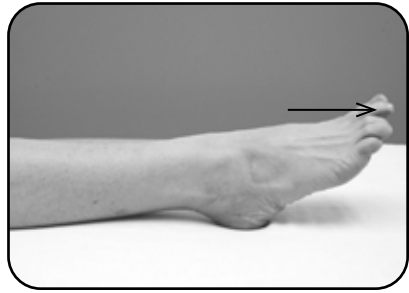
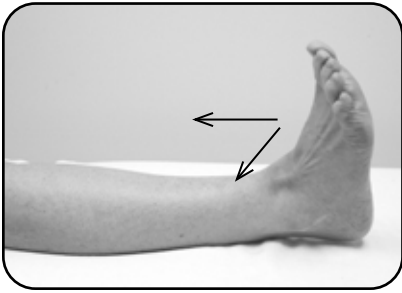
- **The incision (cut) needs to be well-healed (closed) and not infected before using heat.**
- Use heat (hot pack, hot water bottle, soak in warm water) for 10 to 15 minutes before activity to help loosen up your foot/ankle.
- Use ice (gel pack, bag of frozen vegetables) for 10 to 15 minutes following activity to help control pain in your foot/ankle.

## Exercises

- Do \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.

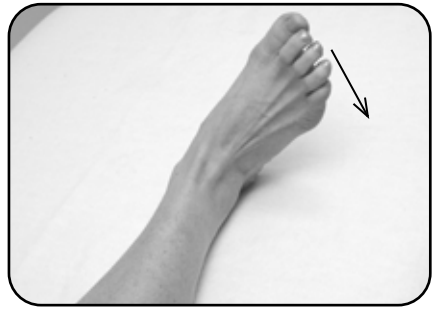
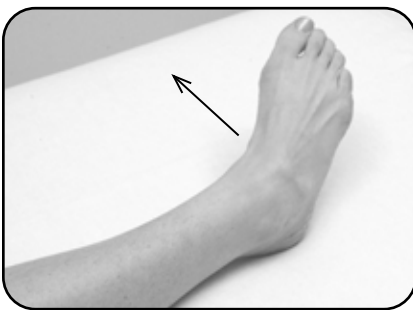
## ☐ Exercise 1

- Move your foot up and down until you feel a mild to moderate stretch.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



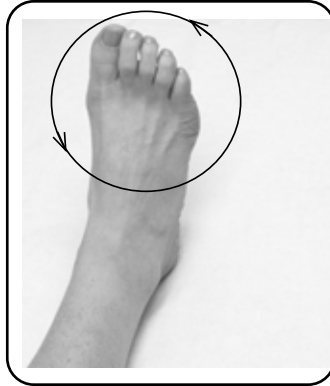
## ☐ Exercise 2

- Move your foot in and out until you feel a mild to moderate stretch.
- Do not move your knee.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 3

- Make a circle with your foot. You should feel a mild to moderate stretch as you move.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 4

- Sit on a chair and place a towel on the floor in front of you. Place your foot on the towel.
- Grasp the towel with your toes.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



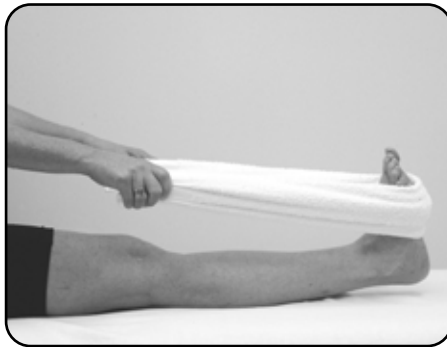
## □ Exercise 5

- Sit on a chair and place a towel on the floor in front of you.
- Place the ball of your foot on the towel and your heel on the floor.
- Grasp the towel with your toes and move the towel to the side using your toes.
- Continue moving the towel until you reach the end by repositioning your foot to the starting position.
- Repeat in the opposite direction.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## □ Exercise 6

- Place a towel around the ball of your foot with your knee straight. Pull your foot towards you as far as possible. You should feel a mild to moderate stretch in the back of your leg. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## □ Exercise 7

- Place a towel around the ball of your foot, with your knee bent. Pull your foot towards you as far as possible. You should feel a mild to moderate stretch in the back of your leg. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 8

- Place a towel around the ball of your foot. Turn your foot inwards using the towel until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 9

- Place a towel around the ball of your foot. Turn your foot outwards using the towel until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.





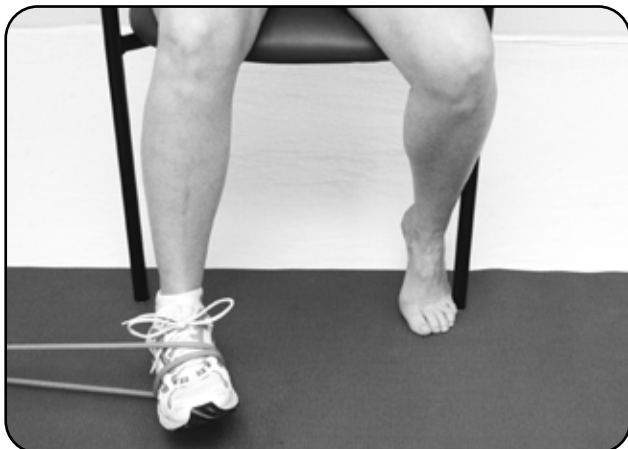
## □ Exercise 10 Strengthening

- Position your ankle to push or pull against the tubing. **Only your foot and ankle should move with these exercises.**
- Sit on a bed, chair, or on the floor.
- Wrap tubing around your foot and loop the tubing around the leg of a table or sofa.
- Move your foot outwards so that your little toe moves out and up against the resistance of the tubing. Hold for 5 seconds, then return to the starting position. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



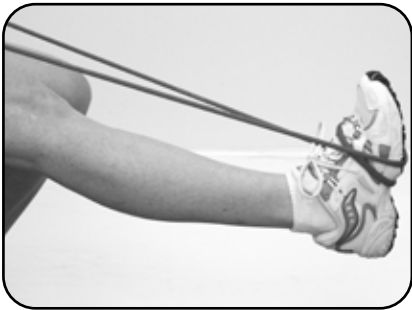
## □ Exercise 11

- Sit on a bed, chair, or on the floor.
- Wrap tubing around your foot and loop the tubing around the leg of a table or sofa.
- Move your foot inwards so that your big toe moves in and up against the resistance of the tubing. Hold for 5 seconds, then return to the starting position.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 12

- Sit on a bed, chair, or on the floor.
- Wrap tubing around your foot and loop the tubing around the leg of a table or sofa.
- Push your foot down against the tubing. Hold for 5 seconds, then return to the starting position.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 13

- Sit on a bed, chair, or on the floor.
- Wrap tubing around your foot and loop the tubing around the leg of a table or sofa.
- Pull your foot up against the tubing. Hold for 5 seconds, then return to the starting position.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## □ Exercise 14

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Hold on to something for balance (like a kitchen counter, a chair).



- Gradually try shifting your weight onto your sore foot/ankle.
- Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then return to starting position.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



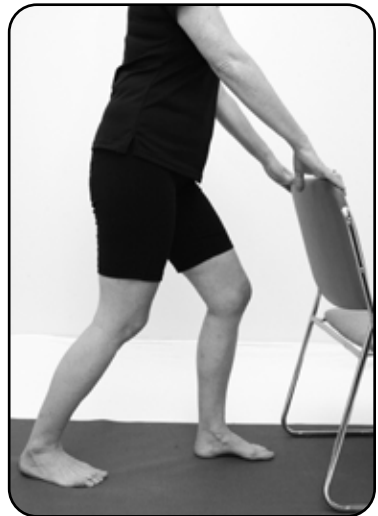
### □ Exercise 15

- Stand with your hands on a wall or chair, with your affected foot behind your other foot. Keep your affected leg straight with your heel on the floor. Bend your front leg, and lean towards the wall or chair. You should feel a mild to moderate stretch in the calf of the affected leg. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 16

- Stand with your hands on a wall or chair with your affected foot behind your other foot. Bend the knee of your affected leg, keeping your heel on the floor. Bend your front leg, and lean towards the wall or chair. You should feel a mild to moderate stretch in the calf of the affected leg. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



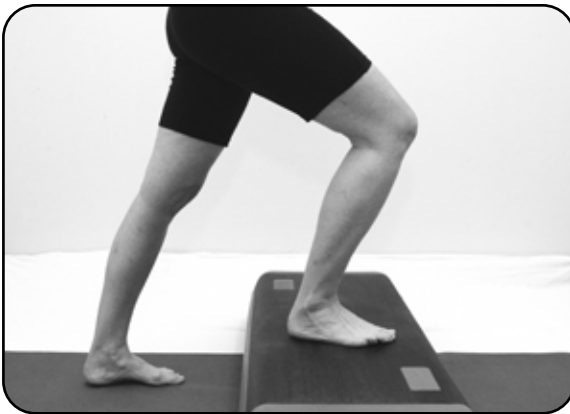
## □ Exercise 17

- Wearing shoes, stand with both feet on the bottom step of a set of stairs. Hold onto a railing for support.
- Place the ball of one foot on the edge of the step. Drop the heel of your foot off the edge of the step until you feel a mild to moderate stretch in your calf muscles, foot, or ankle.
- Hold for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



## □ Exercise 18

- Put your affected foot on a chair or step. Hold on to something for balance, like a railing or chair. Lean forward, keeping your heel flat on the chair or step. You should feel a mild to moderate stretch in the back of your ankle or calf. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## □ Exercise 19

- Stand beside a chair and put your lower leg (shin) on the seat of the chair. Place your hand on your heel and push your heel and foot down onto the chair. You should feel a mild to moderate stretch in the front of your ankle.
- Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.





## □ Exercise 20

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold on to something for balance (like a kitchen counter, a chair). Rise up onto your toes. Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.
- Progression: When your ankle gets stronger, do this exercise without holding on to anything for balance.



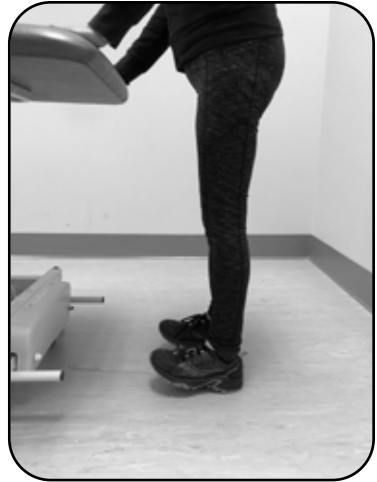
## □ Exercise 21

- Stand on the foot of your affected leg. Hold on to something for balance (like a kitchen counter, a chair). Rise up onto your toes. Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.
- Progression: When your ankle gets stronger, do this exercise without holding on to anything for balance.



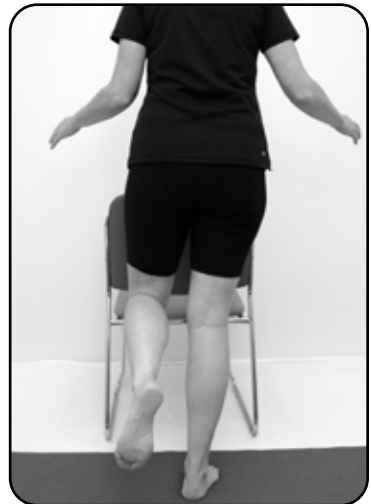
### □ Exercise 22

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold on to something for balance (like a kitchen counter, a chair). Lift the front of your feet off the floor, so that you are standing on your heels. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.
- **Do not lean backwards.**
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



### □ Exercise 23

- Stand by something stable (like a kitchen counter) and hold on with both hands. Balance on your affected foot.
- Slowly try to use less hand support (use 1 hand, then no hands). Hold as long as you can (up to 1 minute) then relax.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.
- Progression: When your ankle gets stronger and you can stand without support, do this exercise with your eyes closed.





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Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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*Prepared by: Physiotherapy*

*Designed by: NSHA Library Services*

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.